

INTRODUCTION

As we study the history of Unity Circle we find awareness of and adaptation to the constant changes in the Des Moines Unitarian Church, our country and the world. But though these were changes through growth and development, what was important in the beginning has remained important to the present time. The editing committee sees the essentials of Unity Circle as:

1. Awareness of the material needs of our own church and a sense of responsibility to try to meet those needs.
2. A realization of the intellectual interest, and even cravings, of the members. Almost from the beginning the programs at regular meetings had equal or even greater attention than fund-raising for church needs. Emphasis was first on literature and art but later on, such social and civic problems as were currently important for study and action received attention. These took precedence over religious topics and were perhaps thought of as supplementary to the work of the minister in the church services.
3. Participation in social and civic work, sometimes as a group, sometimes as individuals inspired by the studies and discussions in the regular meetings.
4. Friendship and loyalty to the group and support of each other. This was an attribute of Unity Circle members from its inception and it remains to many the most precious gift of our group at the present time.

Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Franquemont, Mrs. Golden and Mrs. Hunter loved Unity Circle. Out of their love came this written history from 1879 to 1967. We have their accounts essentially as they wrote them. We do not believe anyone else would express the truths of our organization as well as they. The remaining years will be added, one by one.

History Editing Committee

(Miss) Agnes McCreery, president, Unity Circle, 1970-1971, chairman

Mrs. O. W. Parker

Mrs. Glen McNeley

DEDICATION

To all the women who, in the past ninety odd years, loved and served Unity Circle, and especially to Mrs. Arthur L. Davis who wrote our first history in 1930, and to Mrs. Fred Hunter, who in 1941 wrote the fact-filled "Triology"; to Mrs. J. R. Golden, whose persistent interest in completing the history never let the project drop; and to Mrs. E. A. Franquemont who finished the work, we dedicate this history.

FOREWORD

A committee was appointed in 1955 by Mrs. J. A. Pollock, then president of Unity Circle, to have a history of the society written. Mrs. J. R. (Myrtle) Golden was chairman of that committee and I was a member. Somehow the idea was buried. After 1961, when Unity Circle celebrated its eightieth birthday, Mrs. Golden urged me to combine Mrs. Fred Hunter's Trilogy of 1941 and my own history of the organization from 1938 on. I always told her I would do it but family affairs intervened just as I began working on it and the project had to be postponed.

A good start had been made before I returned from a six weeks' trip in 1963. I found Mrs. Golden's life to be slipping away. I worked feverishly to get it ready for her to read but I was too late. Dorothy, her daughter, told her at the last that it was almost finished.

That was a year ago (1963). I rewrote most of what I had written. The "Trilogy" is well worth reading. The manuscripts are in Unity Circle's filing cabinet. I am not satisfied with this present account as too much of Unity Circle's part in the cultural life of Des Moines had to be left out. You can get ideas of it from the scrapbooks and newspaper articles therein.

Mrs. Golden's thought was that future members could get ideas for their work, as well as know better the ideals and aims of Unity Circle.

This is dedicated to Mrs. Myrtle Golden.

(Mrs.) Ethel V. (E. A.) Franquemont, Des Moines, 1964

A Short History of the Unity Circle of the First Unitarian Church
of Des Moines, Iowa

Unity Circle of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines is unique and unusual among women's church organizations. It began, as most of them do, as an aid society for the church, but in its 86 years of growth the aid part seemingly became subordinated to the literary and cultural development of its members. However, the aid was usually there and ready to pay the rent, the salaries of the minister and the janitor, the coal bill or to decorate the church and repair the organ. These activities, and raising the money for them, were relegated to the executive board and the committees. They were rarely discussed in the general meetings. This is still the practice of the Circle. In this history it will be seen how this came about.

The history readily divides itself into eight periods:

- I - 1879-1890 - Formative period. Ministers the guiding spirit. First building 1882.
- II - 1890-1899 - Development period. Ministers still the guiding spirit but gave only two or three programs yearly.
- III - 1899-1920 - Influential period in the city. World War I. Ministers directed the Circle's studies until 1916 when Curtis Reese did not continue this. New building 1905.
- IV - 1920-1938 - Non-church members withdraw. Ministers no longer guiding spirit. Depression.
- V - 1938-1956 - New Growth. World War II. Unity Circle members were members of the church for the most part.
- VI - 1956-1958 - Preparation for and settling into new building opened September, 1957.
- VII - 1958-1961 - New Members and projects. Merger of Unitarian and Universalist churches; and of the women's organizations in the two churches.
- VIII - 1961-1967 - Continuing to function as a charter member of Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.

I. THE FORMATIVE PERIOD (1879-1890)

Quoting from a history of Unity Circle written in 1930 by Mrs. Arthur L. Davis:

"The Unitarian Church was organized during the summer of 1877 by J. R. Effinger, the minister. Financial notes in the secretary's book of the Ladies Aid Society show receipts from sociables and sewing in 1878 which is evidence that the women were active before they were formally organized in 1879. (We have taken this date as the beginning of what is now Unity Circle.) A constitution of the Ladies Aid Society was adopted January 28 of that year. Mrs. Effinger became the first president.

The first constitution commenced:

Art. 1 - This society shall be called the Ladies Aid Society of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines.

Art. 2 - The object of this society shall be two-fold:

1st - To promote the social life of the church and the mutual improvement of its members.

2nd - To raise funds to aid in meeting the necessary expenses of the church.

The officers and their duties were given.

At the first meeting they decided to meet each week, alternating sewing with a social afternoon. Later on some interesting resolutions were adopted:

1st - The work of the society shall be under the direction of three directresses.

2nd - Tea shall be served at each meeting consisting of bread and butter, one kind of cake, cold meat or cheese and tea. (No member was expected to exceed this bill-of-fare but many did.)

3rd - The members are requested to pay 25 cents each to form a fund for the purchase of materials for the sewing group.

They made kitchen and linen aprons and tidies. The attendance was small, seven or eight being considered average, but they made money, we know, because they loaned George White \$200 at 8 per cent which he paid back. This is probably the only time Unity Circle ever loaned money.

In 1879 members conducted a dining hall at the State Fair then held north and east of Forty-second Street and Grand Avenue. They made \$1250.25. Besides that they gave during the year sociables, strawberry and ice cream festivals and dinners, as well as conducted sales of their sewing to make money. With this they bought hymn and service books for the church and Sunday School, paid the organist and janitor, and met many other expenses of the church. There was no church building. They met in the homes of members.

The Rev. S. S. Hunting came as minister in the spring of 1880. He and Mrs. Hunting brought great inspiration to the Church. Through their efforts a building was erected at Fifteenth and Linden Streets in 1882. The Ladies Aid paid for the platform chairs, the carpet, a piano and helped pay for the lectern. The reading stand in the Mary Safford room today is that lectern.

From the secretary's books of this period a gradual change in the Ladies Aid Society can be seen. Papers were prepared by members. Book reviews, magazine articles and poems were read and discussed. On March 11, 1885, Mr. Hunting called a meeting and proposed a new plan for the society. What it was, is not given in the report which says the plan was adopted and a committee was appointed to make plans to carry out the ideas. No secretary's books are to be found from that time for five years. It is surmised that right there the change from emphasis on sewing and other money making projects to literary and other cultural subjects was made.

When the Ladies Aid secretary's books are again available on April 25, 1890, it was being reorganized, the name was changed to the Women's Section of the Unity Club. Unity Club was the men's group. The officers of the club were to be the same, but the Executive Committee, the Social and the Program Committees appear for the first time. They decided to change from the study of Shakespeare to domestic economy, which would indicate that they had been very literary during the intervening years. Also, they were devoting one half hour to current events and one half hour to business, while the rest of the time was given over to the reading of original papers or selected articles. There is no mention of money making or sewing. From then on the secretary merely said the allotted time was given to the business of the day. No motions were recorded. So the information is meager.

We have printed programs of the period. The names of the members were not listed but we get some idea of who they were from their part on the program. At the June 3, 1890 meeting Mrs. L. A. Conger, mother of Dr. Alice Hunter, read a paper, "Summary of Edward Everett Hale's Article on 'HOW TO LIVE'". At a later meeting that month Mrs. M. B. Johnston read an original paper on "Funeral and Mourning Customs", which created a great discussion. Members voted to offer it for publication in The Sunday Register, as many of their papers had previously appeared in those pages. The next secretary's report said the article had been "rejected by that nondescript sheet known as The Register but had been accepted by the Sunday Leader."

The financial situation was not as good as it had been, and at one time there was only seven dollars in the treasury and the Sunday School had to pay the janitor. There seemed to be no mention of fund raising, so at this point it was not exactly an aid society.

To present the new constitution for adoption a meeting was called at the church building in August of 1890. Only eleven persons were present, but the meeting lasted three hours and to quote the secretary, "The whole club was almost swamped by the moot points in parliamentary law, but at last the constitution and by-laws were accepted as read". A copy of it is written in the secretary's book of 1891.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT PERIOD (1890-1899)

When in 1890 Mr. Hunting became the district representative of the American Unitarian Association, he resigned as minister but continued to live in Des Moines. Miss Ida C. Hultin came as the first woman minister of the society. So we see that it was probably due to Mr. Hunting that from 1885 to 1890 came the great change in the programs of the Women's Section of the Unity Club that set it apart from the usual church aid society and made it a literary club. Foremost interests were the study of literature, civic, and government problems rather than religious ideas. However, they rallied to the church's support. Their committees took care of the dinners, usually priced at fifteen cents. They sponsored the socials, again at the admission price of fifteen cents. They put on bazaars and other entertainments. The business went on; the money was made; the social life expanded; but the Women's Section of Unity Club had their intellectual programs undisturbed.

We have no printed programs before 1892 but the secretary's book of 1890 reveals the trend of the thought. They were devoting as much time to city problems as to the literary work being studied. For instance, they became involved in a discussion about a ruling of the city library that the names of women property owners on certificates were rejected, and they petitioned that this be changed. They created enough publicity that the city librarian attended the next meeting and explained that changing the rule would increase and complicate the librarian's duties without "obviating the difficulty". She did not convince the women.

In October 1890 it was noted that the club was invited to the Parlor Suffrage meeting at the Joel P. Davis home. Joel Pennington Davis was a charter member of the church. Mrs. Arthur L. Davis, whose history is often quoted here, was his daughter-in-law and Harold Davis of our present congregation is his grandson. The women studied the Australian ballot system, but no papers appeared on their programs on Women Suffrage until May 1891 when Mrs. Hunter, who was to have talked on "Home Manners and Conversation", substituted a paper on "How Will the Ballot Affect the Home". This sounded like the later Mrs. Fred Hunter, whose name does not appear until the year book of 1905, so she must have been Mrs. F. H. Hunter, the mother of Fred and Guy Hunter. The program listed papers on Toynbee, Count Tolstoi's "Christian Doctrine of Non-Resistance" and Sir John Lubbock's "Duty of Happiness". The home was not neglected. One paper on "Dress" had exhibits from Younker's store. For another interesting program we'll quote from the secretary's book.

"May 6, 1892 was the day for the social meeting and the members were entertained by the reading by Miss Harriet Stowe of a unique story published by Little's Magazine 42 years ago entitled 'A Common China Plate'." It was the old fashioned plate of blue willow-ware, whose pictures told a love story. The plate was exhibited by Mrs. Hunting who said she had raided the stores of Boston on her visit there in search of one to illustrate the story.

The first printed program we have is for 1892-1893. Here is a copy of that program:

Friday Afternoons

September 23

Social DayPresident's Address
(Mrs. Virginia H. Reichard)

October 7

American History.....Mrs. Hunting

October 21

American History.....Mrs. Scoville

November 4
 American History.....Mrs. Perkins
 November 18
 Social Day.....Discussion of Formative Influences
 December 2
 How Does Evolution Affect Religion.....S. S. Hunting
 December 16
 The House Beautiful.....Mrs. Hawley
 December 30
 The Ethics of Self Development.....Mrs. Reichard
 January 13
 Social Day..The New Orthodoxy.....Leon Harvey (minister)
 January 27
 The Australian Ballot System.....Mrs. Hunter
 February 10
 The Hull House College Settlement.....Mrs. Wheeler Carpenter
 February 24
 The Place of the Short Story in Literature.....Mrs. George Garver
 March 9
 Social Day..Paper on Music.....Miss Stowe
 March 23
 Discussion.....David Grieve
 April 6
 The Salvation Army.....Miss Stowe
 April 20
 Women as Wage Earners.....Miss Flora Wright
 May 4
 Social Day..The Church Social as a Factor in
 the Spiritual Life.....Mrs. Babbitt
 May 18
 The Hampton School.....Mrs. Harvey
 June 1
 The Annual Meeting

The members contributed all of the above programs except those of the two ministers.

Quoting Mrs. Davis: "A meeting of unusual interest in 1893 was held at the Sabin House as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Johnston. At this meeting Leon Harvey, minister of the church, read a paper on the 'New Orthodoxy'. A number of ministers of various churches of the city were invited to attend and discuss the paper. Those who accepted were: Father Nugent, Catholic; Dr. Breeden, Christian Church; our Mr. Hunting; and Dr. Johnson and Dr. Newman, whose affiliations I do not know. The audience of 65 represented nearly every church in the city. The secretary, Mrs. Hawley, in her summary of the year, says, 'Such a meeting has never been held in Des Moines, and demonstrates the fact that free talks on religious subjects by men and women of opposite beliefs can be held without a ripple of discordant feeling being perceptible.' In her secretary's report of the meeting, Mrs. Hawley wrote, 'At the close of the discussion the dining room doors were opened where dainty refreshments were served on snowy linen that was decorated with roses and smilax.'"

To quote Mrs. Davis further, "On April 28, 1893, the club was admitted to membership in the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs. The certificate is marked 'Charter Member' and signed by the president of the Federation, Mrs. James G. Berryhill, a member of Unity Circle.

On November 3, 1895 the constitution was revised and the name changed to the Women's Unity Club. Usually the club met in homes, most of the time at Mrs. Hunting's. Mrs. Davis goes on:

"A meeting of interest in 1894 was also held at the Sabin House on April 5 with Mrs. Hunting and Mrs. Johnston as hostesses to the club and 100 invited guests. The occasion was in honor of Julia Ward Howe and to hear an address by her on the subject 'The Study of Philosophy'. Following her talk she spoke on the federation of clubs and answered many questions. The Sunday before she had preached at our church and filled it to overflowing."

Those of you who read Dr. Alice Hunter's "Women's Role in the Unitarian Movement", will recall that she also speaks of Mrs. Howe's preaching in the church.

Again, the secretary's books are missing for the critical period from 1895 to 1913, during which the church and club suffered one of its worst depressions and later reached its high point of influence in the city.

Now we have yearbooks of Unity Club and they show an even higher standard than formerly. The members were writing their own papers at first, but gradually the names of men and women from outside the group appear. There was one debate in December 1898 in which two members of Unity Club known to many of our present members - Dr. Alice Hunter and Mrs. R. S. Keith - participated. Their subject was "Resolved That Heredity is More Potent Than Environment in the Formation of Character". Dr. Alice Hunter had the affirmative side. The Unity Club's meetings were considered very highly throughout the city, is shown by the fact that The Register often sent a reporter to them, so The Register had gained status.

In these years Mr. Harvey was the minister. Mrs. Fred Hunter said of him, "He attracted many old and young people to the church who have been pillars ever since: Mrs. R. S. Keith, Mrs. Conger and daughters, the Vieser family, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson Brigham, the H. H. Griffiths, and many others." He left the church in 1897.

III. THE INFLUENTIAL PERIOD (1899-1920)

Mrs. Davis says, "Miss Safford and Miss Jenney came to the Des Moines church in 1899. It is my understanding that it was after they came that Unity Club was reorganized and named Unity Circle." Mrs. Golden surmised that the new constitution was adopted early in 1903. Many of the present constitution's articles are the same. For instance: "The object of the club shall be the promotion of social, intellectual and religious life of its members, and the up-building of the Unitarian Church". Somewhere along the way the last part was changed to read "the moral life of its members and the community". It is this way in the 1910 yearbook. The dues were fifty cents, but at one period associate members paid one dollar. One article gave as the duties of the executive committee to arrange for church suppers. The program for 1900-1901 shows an almost staggering list of studies given in papers by the club.

Representative Unitarians

Sept. 28	- William Ellery Channing, the apostle.....	Mrs. Mary Safford
Oct. 12	- Theodore Parker, the prophet.....	Miss Flora Wright
Oct. 26	- Ralph Waldo Emerson, the seer.....	Mrs. Eliza Hunter
Nov. 9	- John Quincy Adams, the statesman.....	Mrs. Rachel Johnson
Nov. 23	- James Russell Lowell, the man of letters.....	Miss Marie H. Jenney
Dec. 7	- Lucretia Mott, the reformer.....	Miss Mary Coggeshall
Dec. 21	- Henry Longfellow, the poet.....	Mrs. Lizbeth Griffiths

Jan. 4 - Nathaniel Hawthorne, the romancer.....Mrs. E. S. Bergan
 Jan 18 - Oliver Wendell Holmes, the humorist.....Miss Harriet Stowe
 Feb. 1 - Dorothea Dix, helper of the helpless.....Mrs. Jenny Bicknell
 Feb. 15 - Lydia Marie Child, friend of the oppressed.....Miss Mary Coggeshall
 Mar. 1 - Louis Agassiz, the scientist.....Mrs. George Usry
 Mar. 15 - Margaret Fuller, the critic.....Mrs. Iona I. Robinson
 Mar. 29 - George W. Curtis, essayist and orator.....Miss Kay Gue
 April 12 - Horace Mann, the educator.....Miss Olive McHenry
 April 26 - Peter Cooper, the philanthropist.....Mrs. Homer Miller
 May 10 - Samuel G. Howe, friend of the blind.....Mrs. Margaret Campbell
 May 24 - Louisa May Alcott, the children's friend.....Mrs. D. H. Reichard

These programs show Miss Safford's handiwork. She was giving the women an insight into the work of great Unitarians in a clear manner but, also, she was getting an insight into the caliber of these women's minds. There is no doubt that they became well informed on Unitarianism. Mrs. Mary Hunter's name appears in the yearbook as chairman of a committee, and that of Mrs. F. O. Green, our oldest living member, as a hostess in the yearbook for 1901-1902. (Mrs. Green dies in 1967.) In that year the women had a rest from writing papers. Miss Safford gave eight programs on Emerson and her associate, Miss Jenney, gave eight on Browning.

By 1902 the church attendance and Unity Circle's membership had grown immensely. Unity Circle had 89 members. Miss Safford stimulated the idea of building a new church. Members sold the old building to a Negro Church, Corinthian Baptist, and met in the Jewish Temple at Eighth and Pleasant Streets while the new building was being erected at Eleventh and Pleasant Streets. Unity Circle's yearbook for 1902-1903 printed the names of the members for the first time. Many of these people were known for years to come. There were 122 members, 42 of whom were associate members. They met at 3:00 P. M. every other Wednesday, which made it possible for teachers to attend and many of them did. Their business meetings began at 2:30 P. M.

In 1903-1904 the members took part in the programs again and wrote papers on various phases of city government. Mrs. Green had one on "Our Water Supply and Fire Protection", and spoke about it just recently. Miss Safford devoted her part of the program to Ralph W. Emerson.

We have the treasurer's reports and they had a yearly balance of \$709.96. They were saving money to help on the new building, and when the congregation moved into it the next year Unity Circle spent \$1,000 on furnishings. Considering the value of the dollar at that time, that is a sizeable sum. They brought from the old building the lectern mentioned in this account, and the green upholstered sofa from Mrs. Hunting's home, which is in our present Mary Safford room.

Miss Safford became very ill and Miss Eleanor Gordon filled her pulpit for two years. To quote Mrs. Fred Hunter:

"The motto in the yearbook was significant of her lectures:

'Out from the burdens of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old'

"The eight lectures on the 'Bible as Literature' were to me the choice programs of all our years."

Miss Gordon wrote a letter to Unity Circle to be read at the sixtieth (actually sixty-second) anniversary. She said of Unity Circle at the time she was minister:

"Not only was Unity Circle the only real literary society in the city, but it was the only real open forum where an attempt was made to answer dangerous questions and a frank discussion was not only tolerated but invited."

The Circle members were still writing papers and book reviews. Miss Safford returned in 1906-1907. Besides her sermons and Unity Circle lectures, she was leading an evening Unity Guild which was studying Shakespeare and Browning with fifteen programs a year. Unity Circle was growing almost out of bounds. By 1908-1909 there were 214 members. There were 135 associate members who chose to pay \$1 each and not take part in the programs or committee work. Among the women who joined during these years were those who were to carry on successfully the ideals of their predecessors: Mrs. Keith, Mrs. Emery and Mrs. Green as early as 1900 and 1902. By 1907-1908 the following had joined: Mrs. A. C. Baker, Mrs. J. M. Bowie, Mrs. H. L. Carrell, Mrs. Arthur Davis, Mrs. J. R. Golden, Mrs. Fred Hunter, Mrs. W. F. Johnston, Mrs. Orson Luin, Mrs. R. L. Parker and Mrs. F. C. Waterbury, most of whom were well known to many of our present membership. (All of these women are now dead.) Miss Safford was lecturing on George Eliot and Browning but the members were also writing papers on psychology, health, philosophy and so on.

The influence of Miss Safford, not only on the church here, but all over Iowa, was almost beyond belief. Her vision and inspiration dominated the women of Unity Circle through many, many years. There was none of the petty jealousy, gossip and rivalry that mar too many women's organizations (and men's too). She gave them the highest ideal of womanhood.

In 1909 Miss Safford exchanged pulpits with Miss Gertrude Von Petzold, who was a German but held a pastorate in England. Years later, during World War II, Dr. Alice Hunter, who kept up her correspondence with Miss Petzold, was collecting money, clothes and food to send to her in Germany.

In her work in Unity Circle, Miss Petzold upheld Miss Safford's high caliber of programs, but a German flavor was added and a great drama interest created. She gave lectures on "Modern Programs in Drama and Story" and made a study of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Nietzsche, Shaw and other playwrights. She carried on this work concerning the drama in the Unity Guild. Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Brown, Miss Mabel Harris and the Caldbeck sisters belonged to this group. Thus Miss Petzold really began the interest in the church of giving plays and through the years many plays were given on the stage of the basement auditorium. Usually Unity Circle's secretary wrote, "It was the drama day and it was lots of fun," but never a word telling what play was given. Miss Petzold left in 1910 and Everett Dean Martin became minister.

Unity Circle had 143 members at this time. The constitution was printed for the first time in the yearbook. That year two themes were discussed in the program on alternate weeks. One theme was periodical literature. Mrs. Gardner Cowles, who was a member, gave the first program on "Newspapers". The second theme was the study of laws. The initial lecture was given by James R. Hanna, the mayor of the city. The other six law programs were given by judges or men who became judges or prominent lawyers of the city. These talks covered everything from employer's liability to laws relating to the city, schools and buses and homes.

The women of Unity Circle were busy sewing, knitting, quilting and so on. Aprons still sold for fifty cents. Altogether they handled about \$600. Mrs. Bowie was corresponding secretary. Mrs. Golden held that office later. Mrs. Baker and Mrs. R. L. Parker, our present

Mrs. O. W. Parker's mother-in-law, were delegates to the City Federation. Mrs. J. E. Lovejoy was recording secretary and Mrs. Arthur Davis treasurer during these years. The Circle's membership was diminishing some. It may be that the club was studying subjects not interesting to many women.

Dr. Martin took an active interest in Unity Circle and gave liberally of his time. He gave seven programs on Tolstoi. He also aroused interest in the Greek Drama with many programs on Greek dramatists. The attendance figures were between 80 and 180. The programs on the "Intellectual Spirit of Modern Europe" drew large audiences. At this time members were allowing \$75 yearly for their speakers and many of them came from Grinnell, Iowa City and even Chicago. They ceased having bazaars but took up a collection at each meeting. The sewing group was still sewing for individual buyers.

By 1915-1916 Dr. Martin had gone and there was no minister to begin the year. So the program committee was confronted with a new situation - no minister to help plan the program and to give half of the lectures! They succeeded beyond their expectations in producing programs that held the interest of the membership. Mrs. Fred Hunter was president. She said that the Little Theater movement began on the opening day. The "Wine Press" was given a dramatic reading by Harriet Mott, assisted by Genevieve Wheat Baal. During the year there were some unusual speakers. Dr. George Foster of Chicago University spoke on "Personality and Public Opinion". The attendance was 235 and the meeting had to move into the auditorium. Another program that filled the church auditorium, including the balcony, was given by Professor Starbuck of the University of Iowa on "The Worth of a Child". Another time Unity Circle joined with the State Suffrage Association in bringing to Des Moines Charlotte Perkins Gilman for an address on "How to Make World Citizens". Admission was charged and Mrs. Davis, who was secretary, wrote, "The Circle realized from that meeting's proceeds quite a snug sum." When she said anything like that, those who knew her can remember how her eyes would twinkle.

Here was the turning point in Unity Circle's programs. From this time on they were on various lines of thought. The present president of Unity Circle, Marjorie E. W. Smith, recalls that her father, Lewis Worthington Smith, once spoke on poetry before the group. She remembers there was real excitement in their household when he returned with a check for twenty-five dollars! From that time on, though the ministers seldom had more than two programs a year, they always attended the meetings and took part in the discussions. Curtis Reese, minister 1915-1919, persuaded the women to join the Alliance of Unitarian Women in 1918. For years Mrs. Hunter was the Alliance chairman for Iowa. She was also the Circle's mentor on Women Suffrage. To quote her summary of Suffrage by Unity Circle: "Our charter members held many offices and did all kinds of drudgery for woman suffrage in the state and county until they died. Loyally assuming their places, new Circle members carried forward the struggle until the referendum." Miss Gordon, who was president in 1908 of the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association, managed the first suffrage parade in the United States at a convention in Boone. Miss Safford was president in 1912. Mrs. M. J. Coggeshall left a large bequest for suffrage work. When Mrs. Homer Miller was president of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, she placed that group on record in favor of suffrage. Other Unity Circle women held these offices: Mrs. Ernest Brown, president Votes for Women's League, Miss Florence Harsh, president of Business Women's Suffrage League, Mrs. Jansen Haines, a member of the I. S. E. S. Association for four years, and Mrs. H. L. Carrell, president of the Des Moines Suffrage 1915-1916.

There had been many programs during these years about the war that was raging in Europe, but only as on-lookers. Suddenly that war became a reality at home. On the program for October 1941 celebrating the club's 60th anniversary, Mrs. A. C. Baker, president 1918-1919,

told about the war work of the Circle. To quote her in part:

"Camp Dodge, just north of the city, filled Des Moines with khaki clad boys aimlessly wandering about. Perhaps the most worthwhile bit in our varied program was the opening of our building, of but three in the city, as a community center for the soldiers. Here dances and games were conducted in a fine wholesome manner, with always a number of G. V. A. (Girls Volunteer Aid) girls assisting. Then once a week on Friday evenings, our minister Curtis Reese was on hand to welcome the boys who had been selected to come for that evening. In other ways Unity Circle members worked early and late, some at the Red Cross rooms making bandages, some at the church building or at Mrs. Van Evera's third floor sewing room, making hundreds of sleeping garments and fifty cootie outfits; some knitted at their own homes - everyone participated. Our patriotism and sympathy went far afield, for Unity Circle 'adopted' eight French orphans." Quoting Mrs. Fred Hunter in her praise for Mrs. Baker:

"During the war the emergency committees of several groups were deeply concerned over the dance hall menace. A dance hall commission was voted for by the city council; Mrs. Jesse Hanna and Mrs. A. C. Baker from Unity Circle were appointed by the Des Moines Federation of Women's Clubs to work with the city council appointees on the commission. They served long after the war was over - fifteen years in all."

Mrs. Baker was tremendously interested in the establishment of a court of domestic relations. Her devotion to the work won her recognition in the first National Conference of Social Work in Des Moines.

Unity Circle members said their programs were incidental to the war, but they were very good. They gave three plays. Among their speakers were Johnson Brigham, Professor Martin, Rabbi Mannheimer, Forrest Spaulding - all prominent men. Mr. Reese resigned in 1919. Those twenty years were the period of Unity Circle's greatest membership and its greatest influence in the city and state. Those women helped organize the State and City Federation of Women's Clubs as well as the Des Moines Women's Club. Mrs. H. L. Carrell, by her persistent work to raise money for it, made possible the remodeling and enlarging of Hoyt Sherman Place, which became the center for the club women of Iowa. Those who came to Des Moines knew the inspiration of the acquaintance with these Unitarian women.

IV. NON-CHURCH MEMBERS WITHDRAW (1920-1938) MINISTERS NO LONGER GUIDING SPIRIT. DEPRESSION

In the next eighteen years, 1920-1938, Unity Circle's membership gradually decreased, as many of its wonderful women died, and many non-Unitarian women dropped out. However, new members with plenty of vigor joined the group. During this period there were six ministers: Charles J. Dutton stayed the longest - six years; Edmund H. Reeman and Henry J. Adlard, four years each; two ministers barely hung up their hats in the minister's study, and E. Burdette Backus was with the church only three years. During this time came the worst financial depression of history, and it was felt in Iowa before much of the United States believed that it was coming. "Prosperity is just around the corner" was the slogan in the East.

However, Unity Circle had survived the First World War very well. Her membership was 131, with an average attendance of forty. The collection did not yield enough money, so members had their first rummage sale in 1921 in the church basement. Mrs. J. R. Golden was in charge of it. It was so successful as a money maker that the women voted to make it a semi-annual affair.

For their opening meeting in 1921 the members had a unique program. They called it the "Harvest Home Number of the Unity Circle's Magazine". For the cover design a group of women were shown as a tableau. Two original short stories and some original poems were read. The advertising was shown by tableaus of children and members interspaced between the articles. The advertising was arranged by Mrs. R. L. Parker.

About that time Mrs. Jansen Haines donated the "strong box" to hold clothing for future rummage sales. It was later used to hold silverware and other items that needed to be locked up.

Unity Circle was not taking much part in civic affairs but now and then adopted resolutions such as the following: "Whereas we recommend a Naval Holiday, be it resolved not to build more battleships; and as experts agree that future wars will be fought with poison gas and other weapons, be it resolved that Unity Circle urges the abolishment of submarines, aerial bombs and other means of wholesale warfare as far as humanly possible through international agreements."

The programs were still outstanding. When J. N. Darling spoke, 115 persons were present. For Professor Starbuck's address, the meeting was held at West High School. Every year three or four plays were given in which the actors were Unity Circle members. Mr. Reeman gave four lectures on the drama and directed the plays. Mr. Adlard, also, encouraged the study and acting of plays. It was he who composed the beautiful parting hymn sung at the close of every service of the church all the following years.

For five years during that time, Mrs. Franklin Brown was treasurer and her books show the business woman's hand. Mrs. A. L. Davis followed her for many years. Her books were quite detailed, as for instance, almost monthly for a few years, an item called "snap dragon" appeared on the books as something sold at meetings. What it was, never was told. At last Mrs. Davis wrote, "Snap Dragon Cleaning Fluid". Mrs. J. M. Bowie, who also had been treasurer, was active in many ways. When she was vice-president, who, by the constitution, is chairman of the hospitality committee, she had a committee of eighteen who did not forget the duty of greeting the persons who attended each meeting. Mrs. J. E. Lovejoy always seemed to be responsible for the drama activity. She wrote many of the plays herself. Mrs. J. R. Golden was the presiding genius of the dinner and sewing committees, the bazaar, the rummage sale and the buyer of equipment. Mrs. Eloise Anderson joined the Circle in 1920-1921 and a few years later was the chairman of the Christmas card sales and a few years still later she was a member of the board. It was her motion that the Unity Circle room was named "Mary Safford Room".

Usually there was a New Year's reception, sometimes at the church building but often at the Lovejoy or Robertson Hunter homes. Dances were often held in the church basement. These people had good times together. It was in 1927-1928 that the custom of the May Breakfast for Unity Circle began. In that period the constitution was revised to make the officers and the board as they are today.

Also, that year the church was redecorated. Mrs. John Rehmann was in charge of the Mary Safford Room. A new carpet and new draperies were bought. In the store-room she found a small table, a book-case and a drop-leaf table, all of which she had refinished. The drop-leaf table is now in the Mary Safford Room in the present building.

Miss Safford died that year and Unity Circle gave the memorial tablet that is now in the room that bears her name.

By 1929 the Circle had very few members from outside the church congregation. It is strange that so few of the descendents of the older women remained in the church to carry on Unity Circle's work. Once Mrs. Golden was asked if these women had children. She answered, "One or two chicks, that is all." These "chicks" married into other churches or went away to college, and since there was little future for them in Des Moines they did not return.

Charles J. Dutton came as minister in 1929. The depression had begun in Iowa on the farms and was being felt in the cities. Unity Circle began to feel the financial burden of the church, which might never have survived without its help. The dues were raised to two dollars and new ideas for money making were tried.

In 1930 the Club was divided into six groups, and each group was to make twenty-five dollars by December 15, and altogether make \$300 before the year was finished. They gave luncheons, card parties, had bake sales and gift sales and achieved their goal. They were carrying on the Circle as they had in the past.

It would be well to quote here Mrs. Hortense Dillon's report from the program committee for 1937:

"Unity Circle occupies and must continue to occupy a unique position in the cultural life of Des Moines. In a city highly organized in the realm of women's societies, we offer a free platform, the only conditions imposed being intelligence and sincerity on the part of the speaker. It is the deeply felt conviction of the program committee that this unique quality is the most precious thing we have to offer to the community. In order to preserve it we must keep flowing all expression of deep, vigorous contemporary movements and thought, subjecting them to courageous analysis and appraisal. Des Moines is well supplied with groups of both men and women who find self expression in entertainment and the more frothy aspects of culture. None offers the opportunity for the complete freedom of discussion offered by Unity Circle. We must be alert, therefore, and not inadvertently slip into the prevailing pattern. It was the purpose of the program committee to reach out into the swirl of confused social and economic movements and try to understand them, and to have deciphered and interpreted for us the new artistic mediums into which these movements are expressing themselves in poetry, art and drama." Here is a copy of the programs for the year:

Sept. 24 - Modern Midwest Literary Trends	Ruth Stewart
Oct. 8 - Possibilities and Limitations of Scientific Thinking.....	E. W. Balduf
Oct. 22 - Adventures in Poetry.....	Thomas W. Duncan
Nov. 5 - Dramatic Reading: "Bury the Dead" Drake University Drama Department.....	Director Professor James J. Fiderlick
Nov. 19 - Revolutions, Past and Present.....	Dean Willard Johnson
Dec. 3 - Vincent Van Gogh.....	Mrs. J. E. Lovejoy
Jan. 14 - Social Interpretation of Poetry.....	Raymond Kresensky
Jan. 28 - Book Review - "The Story of Congress" by Ernest Sutherland Bates.....	Laetitia M. Conrad
Feb. 11 - Psychological Types.....	E. Burdette Backus
Feb. 25 - Modern Labor Problems.....	J. C. Lewis
Mar. 11 - "The Road to Endor"	Esther Barstow Hammand
Mar. 25 - Book Review: "Charlotte Perkins, an Autobiography"	Dr. Alice Hunter
April 8 - Book Review: "The Big Money" by John Dos Passos.....	Carl Bogenrief

April 22 - Progressive Education Professor Luther Stalnaker
May 6 - Annual Luncheon

The women in the earlier years were getting a liberal education in history and literature. Here they are studying all phases of contemporary life.

By 1939 when Mr. Dutton left, there were only 61 members. They had only \$600 and their year's balance was \$92.58 in the spring of 1935, but that had sunk to \$8.49 the following year. But for "Lady Bountiful", as Mrs. Hunter called Mrs. F. C. Waterbury, they could not have made the monthly payment to the church. However, they still had the organ fund. They had changed the meeting time to 2:30 P. M. Despite the money shortage, the programs maintained their former high caliber. Men like Professor Stalnaker, Tom Duncan, Edward Steinmetz, Dean Willard Johnson and Superintendent of Schools Studebaker seemed willing to give their time. Also, they had Mr. Backus, who talked often on psychological problems. During his ministry the membership began to increase, as the church's congregation increased.

V. NEW GROWTH (1938-1956) WORLD WAR II

In the next few years, many of the women of the older group were too old to carry on the work. A number of new and vigorous women joined the club.

In 1936-1937 these names appear for the first time:

Mrs. Vinal Kennedy, Mrs. Harold Davis, Mrs. Dorothy Luin, Mrs. Emil Nelson

In 1937-38 these women joined:

Mrs. Grover Butcher, Mrs. Tom Dyer, Miss Margaret Fergusen (now Mrs. C. E. Chamberlain), Mrs. C. B. Miller, Mrs. Harold Moore, Mrs. E. A. Franquemont, Mrs. R. L. Steelsmith, Mrs. Genevra Wood (later Mrs. Vernon Blank).

In 1938-1941 these women became members:

Mrs. Oval Quist, Mrs. Margaret Locker, Mrs. George Shane, Mrs. J. A. Pollock, Mrs. Florence Orwick and Mrs. Louis Bertin.

In this list of women, you will find the names of devoted, energetic workers. They became the presidents, the board members, the program planners and the money makers, working with the older women who had been and still were the inspiration for aims and ideals for the group. These new women loved the atmosphere of friendliness, the absence of gossip and small talk, and above all the absence of fault finding. If a person did not accomplish all that was expected, they found excuses for her. In the fall of 1938 Mrs. F. C. Waterbury again gave the board \$50 to pay the August and September pledges to the church. This was the last time she had to come to the rescue. She gave many donations after but they were not so urgently needed.

Mr. Backus had left, and Karl Bach had come as minister. Unity Circle did not change. The new members had many surprises as they worked with the older women. They could cook, crochet, knit, sew, put on plays, take part in debates and symposiums, talk philosophy and run bazaars and rummage sales. Each did what she was best fitted for. To be wealthy made no difference in their contribution. Mrs. F. C. Waterbury, probably the wealthiest

woman in town, made a double apron that was of the finest percale and beautifully sewed. She told the Unity Circle board that she would make them for the bazaar, but they must be sold for one dollar. The board discussed it and at last decided they could never get one dollar for any apron. Mrs. R. S. Keith pieced quilt after quilt, after she was unable to help in other ways. The quilting group did the quilting and the finished quilt was raffled off. They were unusually beautiful, but someone not connected with the church was usually the winner. At last to our great delight, the last quilt was won by Mrs. Eloise Anderson. It was the loveliest of all.

These same women listened to programs on Atomic Energy, History, Future World Government, Philosophy and Art. They asked penetrating questions and often disagreed with the speaker. One time George Shane gave an illustrated lecture on "Understanding Modern Art". After the discussion was over, Mrs. Fred Hunter shook her head and said, "Do you know, I just think I am not up to it. I don't like it."

These older women knew what their church stood for. Mrs. Mary Hunter wrote in 1941, "Somewhere there is a framed motto of 'Our Creed'. It reads:

'The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
The Progress of Mankind Onward and Upward.'

It seems to be obsolete today." The Universalists used a similar one but added:

'Salvation by character
Final harmony of all souls with God.'

In Mrs. Fred Hunter's part of the Trilogy given in 1941 on October 8 she said, "The oldest programs we have indicate that Unity Circle has had as its current of thinking from then to now, the pursuit of culture and knowledge, together with many movements for civic betterment, rather than the study of religious principles, as such."

The programs were still carrying out the idea of presenting the acute problems of the day. Mrs. Donald Anderson piloted many of those programs and she kept the standards very high. Some travel talks and hobby interests perhaps took the place of the drama programs, but definitely there were more programs on the Unitarian movement by participants in the conventions and summer camps. Of the fifteen programs a year, the minister or men of the church gave five or six, and the women gave a number themselves. Music had its share of attention. Through the years there had been wonderful musical talent in the Circle. Mrs. R. S. Keith and her daughter, Mrs. John Rehmann, Mrs. Orson Luin and her daughter, Helen Luin Burgess, Mrs. W. F. Johnston and her daughter, Mrs. Vernon Blank, Mrs. Donald Anderson, Mrs. Harold Davis and Mrs. Percy Potter gave liberally of their time and talent. There were two pianos in the room. Music usually started the programs.

The treasurer's reports of those years show that Unity Circle made between \$450 and \$600 yearly. In 1941 the organ fund of \$371.34 was given to the church society to help in repairing and electrifying the pipe organ. The Unity Circle women redecorated the Mary Safford Room. The estimated cost was \$51. There was only \$47.86 in the treasury but they went ahead with the plans and gave a dinner to make the rest of the money. The draperies looked very faded when they came back from the laundry. To buy new ones was out of the question. Mrs. R. L. Steelsmith, the president, had an idea that was used. The board had its monthly meeting and after a potluck luncheon the members colored designs on those yards

and yards of draperies with crayola and ironed the color in. It took a good many days of work to finish them but when they were hung they looked quite nice. This was in November 1941.

In December, 1941, war broke over the United States again. Our Unitarian young married people were literally scattered to the four winds, and the boys were in the army or navy before anyone could realize it. Camp Dodge was only a receiving and dispatching center, no longer a training center as in World War I. No soldier stayed more than a few days, so there was not much a group such as Unity Circle could do. The women began to find ways of helping besides listening to programs about the war and buying war bonds. By the summer of 1942 they had found plenty to do.

Dorothy Luin, who followed Mrs. Steelsmith as president, (1942-1943) was Unity Circle's delegate to the Lake Geneva conference that year. Others from the church were also there. One of the speakers at the conference was Dr. Charles R. Joy, European commissioner for the Unitarian Service Committee (1940-1944). The delegates came back so horrified by Dr. Joy's account of the victims of Naziism in Southern France and the needs of the Unitarian Service Committee which was working with a Quaker group to alleviate some of the suffering, that they electrified Unity Circle and the church society to try to cooperate with the denomination's Service Committee. They sponsored some benefits to make money for this purpose. The great work they did in the next few years was collecting clothing and shipping it to the warehouses to be sent to France. The garments were cleaned and repaired before being sent. Huge boxes were on their way almost weekly.

In that good work the women also had fun, with many laughs. After a member could not find her coat, several boxes were opened before it was recovered. After that packers watched their own wearing apparel more closely. This also shows the quality of the clothing sent. One young woman, who was going to California, took off her fur coat and put it in one of the boxes. She left as most of the young adults and eighteen year old boys did. It was a sorrowful time and only work helped the women live through it.

Grant Butler came as our minister in September, 1944. He and his wife, Calla, not only encouraged Unity Circle to continue to work with the Unitarian Service Committee, but gave of their own time and strength to increase the amount of help given.

June 3 to 15, 1945, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration sponsored a nationwide food collection for European war sufferers. The churches of Des Moines had a campaign for canned food. The Unitarians offered their church basement as a collection and packing center. Huge drays brought great loads of boxes of the donations and they were packed in rows from floor to ceiling with only narrow aisles between. That basement was about as big as the present church dining room. Work parties of men and women were organized for days and evenings. They packed and sealed the boxes for shipment. Loads were taken away and more loads came. Unity Circle members helped with this work.

Between that and other war work, the women almost lived at the church. One big project was cutting the U. S. Army buttons off World War I overcoats and sewing on plain ones in their place. These overcoats had been made available by an officer at Fort Des Moines. He had heard of the relief efforts of Unity Circle. These coats were sent overseas for the stricken refugees.

Unity Circle itself had a Red Cross sewing group that met at Mrs. Robertson Hunter's home every Tuesday. When the Red Cross did not have sewing for them they worked on their own bazaar items. Aprons were made from scraps of material brought in, because store shelves were bare of yard goods. Another group met at Mrs. Graham's and made cloth dolls

and doll clothes for the bazaar. Another group was making toy animals. Also many of Unity Circle women were manning sewing machines or making bandages at Red Cross centers.

All that time programs of Unity Circle were held twice a month and the social affairs were going on. Mrs. Butler, who had owned a tearoom at one time, taught the women, especially Mrs. Dwight Locker, how to make money on dinners and luncheons. Of course, there were ration stamps for meat and sugar and other foods, and Mrs. Locker took care of that. For years she managed the dinners, and did not seem to think anything of making 300 biscuits to serve with creamed chicken. The dinners were especially well attended during the war years. It helped on the family's own ration stamps. The dinners at that time cost about 85 cents.

Gradually through the years Unity Circle made an increasing amount of money each year. The sewing and bazaar groups averaged from \$150 to \$250. In 1945 the Ways and Means Committee made \$450. They had paid \$40 toward reroofing the church building, \$75 on other renovations, \$64.20 toward cleaning the outside of the building. They painted all the high backed chairs, redecorated and refurnished the ladies lounge with a new mirror and rattan furniture. They came out just even on one affair - a play, "The Skin of Our Teeth" at the Kendall Theater. As Mrs. Davis said in her report, "Although we made no money, we lost none and had a good experience".

The rummage sales made more money than in previous years because clothing was scarce. Mrs. Katherine Bertin has been chairman of that committee since 1944 to the present time. Twenty-seven years! What a job!

The programs discussed many of the effects of the war on various phases of life. Superintendent of Schools, N. D. McCombs, talked of its effect on the teaching profession, Charles Ransom discussed "Civil Liberties in War Times", Glen Law gave a program on "Post War Planning", Forrest Seymour reviewed "The Pan American Scene", Robert Root saw "The Possibilities of a Lasting Peace", Robert Blakely, Robert Burlingame and Joseph Ratner were also favorite speakers. Several symposiums by members were given - one on the Soong Family of China. Mrs. Daisy Green took part in it.

The war over, Unity Circle sold its war bonds, and turned its attention to making as much money as possible for putting the church in good condition. With the laundry next door pouring out black smoke, the Mary Safford Room needed painting again. This time it cost \$35. Unity Circle assisted in redecorating the auditorium and the dining room. For ten years, from 1947, they handled between \$1,000 and \$1,500 yearly.

In 1948 Mr. and Mrs. Butler helped organize the Evening Alliance. Mrs. Ida Johnson was the first president. The aim was to provide an organization that teachers, social workers, office workers, employed women in general, and mothers of small children, could attend because of the time of the meeting. Their ideal was, besides the study of the world and home problems, to promote churchmanship; to help in the smooth working of the church, rather than to emphasize making money for it. Together the two organizations have accomplished much. Usually they have had some joint meetings every year.

Mr. Butler left in the spring of 1948. Charles W. Phillips was minister from 1948 to 1956. The church was growing. Many women of great assistance to Unity Circle became members. Mrs. Frank Richardson, Mrs. Charles Ritchey, the Caldbeck sisters (now retired from teaching), Mrs. George Shane (who rejoined), Mrs. J. Herbert Blackhurst, Mrs. William C. Shaw, Miss Daisy Whitfield; later Mrs. W. T. Edgren, Mrs. William Fritze, Mrs. I. C. Pooley, Mrs. O. W. Parker, Mrs. William C. Flatley, Mrs. Earl G. Wills,

to mention a few who joined.

The war had broadened the Circle's interests into several fields:

1. They talked more about race relations than previously.
2. Through the Beacon Street office they learned of a Negro grade school that needed assistance. Miss Mabel Harris, with Mrs. J. R. Golden's assistance and contributions from Unity Circle, sent a box of school supplies to that school annually for years.
3. Every year a contribution from \$30 to \$60 was sent to the Unitarian Service Committee, besides boxes of clothing.
4. Acting on request from the Y.W.C.A., Unity Circle sponsored teen-age dances, chaperoned by church people every Friday evening. The old building saw a lot of fun and excitement.
5. An interest in adoption and the laws pertaining to it was developed by renting the building twice a season to the Iowa Children's Home Society, for them to entertain their many adoptive parents throughout Iowa, and to discuss their mutual problems. Unity Circle served refreshments and had the room ready for them.
6. Mrs. Walter T. Edgren, working with the Child Welfare Department of Polk County Welfare, aroused interest in helping supply clothing for the children of Aid to Dependent Children families. This resulted in a few women meeting at Mrs. E. A. Franquemont's and renovating or making new garments out of old materials. The law has been changed but the committee headed by Mrs. H. W. Grubbs continued working until she moved away. Hundreds of garments were contributed yearly to the Polk County Welfare Department.
7. In 1952 Evening Alliance, with Mrs. Dwight Crosby (now Mrs. Charles Thompson) as president, initiated the very successful part that the Unitarian Church has since played in the then newly organized City Foreign Student Weekend. The church basement in the following years always had some foreign booths set up and some committee of church women were there serving cookies. Another committee headed by Mrs. Louis Bertin usually served the coffee and tea at the luncheon for the students which was then held at the Y.W.C.A. Mrs. J. A. Pollock was a country Chairman in the eastern Asia division and Mrs. Franquemont was both assistant chairman for India and housing chairman for the church.

The programs of Unity Circle reflected these new interests: The United Nations, the emerging nations, World Trade. Iowa's place in the post-war world also came in for attention. No plays were given by members but Professor Fiderlick of the Drama Department of Drake University had a group of players presenting some production for the club annually.

Money was being made and spent. At last Unity Circle had a little kitchen and serving space just off the Mary Safford Room. It helped tremendously for the luncheons and weddings Unity Circle was serving. They also bought a new stove and a coffee urn for the church kitchen, silverware by the dozens and new dining room tables, the latter costing \$265. In 1953 Miss Daisy Whitfield gave \$50 in memory of her mother, Mrs. Nellie Burchfield, who had died in 1947. With it Unity Circle bought the white Syracuse china now in the Mary Safford Room. Incidentally, it is interesting to know that Miss Whitfield's grandfather was

the first organist for the church. A large heirloom tankard that came from Mrs. Earl Wills' home was replated and is now a part of the Circle's possessions used on special elaborate occasions. Unity Circle had summer teas to raise money to buy a motion picture projector. They raised \$196.98 and Mrs. John Gould gave \$115.84 toward it. The projector at the present church is this machine.

VI. NEW CHURCH BUILDING (1956-1958)

By the end of the second golden period of Unity Circle in 1956, many of its tireless workers were lost. The husbands retired or were transferred and they left the city. Among them were Mrs. Ritchey, Mrs. Fritze, Mrs. Pooley, Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Flatley and Mrs. Steelsmith. Some of these women had been with Unity Circle many years and their contributions were tremendous and their loss incalculable.

A new meeting house was being built and the old one demolished. Mr. Phillips resigned and there was no minister. Mrs. Lillian Noland was the last president in the old building. Mrs. Louis Bertin was president for the next year when services were held in the Y.W.C.A. building. The meeting time was changed to 1:30 and only one program a month planned. On alternate weeks there was a social afternoon at some member's home.

The summer's work was to transfer all the moveable belongings from the old building. It was a tremendous job as things were stored in various homes. Mrs. Golden's part in this work was almost unbelievable. Her lists of what, and where everything was stored, were invaluable. When they were finally collected, it seems that only a folding screen was missing.

Thus Unity Circle went into the beginning of the period at the Y.W.C.A. Its attendance and membership dropped until it seemed scarcely worthwhile to go on with the effort. To Mrs. Louis Bertin must be given the credit for keeping it going. But she had valiant helpers especially in both the program and the ways and means committee. Surprisingly, money was made and a good deal donated. Almost \$500 had been the balance from the preceding year and more than \$1,000 was handled during the year. The greeting card project made \$172.24, the rummage \$71, and other activities about \$313. Several gifts of money, especially for the kitchen in the new building, were received.

The programs were interesting throughout the year. Mrs. Harold Moore was chairman. The new trends of thinking, that had been noted for several years, appeared. The interest in the adoption of children culminated in a program "Adoption: Can it be Improved?". A panel discussion with Mr. Richard Lewis, Director of the Iowa Children's Home Society; Ross Wilbur, Director of Child Welfare from the State Department of Social Welfare, and an adoptive parent, was very informative.

A panel discussion on "Minority Housing" aroused more interest. The committee on Service and World Fellowship, headed by Mrs. Robert Bull, determined to do something about it. They planned to make a house canvass in the city to determine how much discrimination existed. It was a huge undertaking and much time was spent on the plans. Before they could get the organization going, another group in the city had obtained permission to make the same canvass. Unity Circle had to give it up but waited in vain for any report of the work of the other organization.

Mrs. John Tam was the first president for Unity Circle in the new building. At the first meeting we listened to the old pipe organ, installed in the new meeting house, played by Mrs. John Wannamaker who showed by her lovely program the range of the old organ. Her guest singer, Miss Kim, delighted everybody.

The years programs continued and enlarged the new interest in Service and Welfare. Two films concerning the work of the Unitarian Service Committee - "The Children of the Pyrenees" in October and "The Green House on the Banks of the Arroyo" in March, were shown. Mrs. L. J. Steelfel of Minneapolis explained the first, and Mrs. Franquemont gave the introduction to the second. The first was one of the meetings shared with Evening Alliance.

Mrs. W. T. Edgren and her visiting social workers carried out the service idea, as did also Mrs. Moore's review of Dr. Schweitzer's Autobiography, and Donna Anderson's report on the Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland which she had just attended. Mrs. Bertin took us into out-of-the-way places in her account and pictures of Europe, but these programs revealed a lack in the new building - no place to show pictures on our new projector. Here was a challenge right away.

Also the kitchen and kitchenette in the Mary Safford Room offered more challenges, for each was bare except for stoves and utensils moved in from the old building. It was up to the women's organizations to finish them. They personally finished the cupboards inside and out, and had the second sink installed. Mr. and Mrs. Glen McClellan provided an electric refrigerator, a necessity which Unity Circle never had. They found their dining room tables were not good work tables for a kitchen and Mrs. Gladys Stribling gave two very stable and attractive new ones and a kitchen clock. Later, when two immense aluminum kettles disappeared, she bought two new ones. She was our "Lady Bountiful" of the period. The expense for the kitchenette in the Mary Safford Room was more than the groups anticipated and both Unity Circle and Evening Alliance treasuries felt the impact. Unity Circle handled \$2333.44 that year and had a balance of \$586. The Circle gave \$500 to the building fund, and had teas to pay the summer expenses. The year was saddened by the death of six of our beloved members, three of whom had been active for some time: Mrs. J. E. Lovejoy, Mrs. Robertson Hunter and Mrs. R. L. Steelsmith. Mrs. A. C. Baker moved to Colorado about that time, but she and Dr. Alice Hunter and Mrs. R. D. Emery were present at the dinner at the Y.W.C.A. building in 1957 when the contents of the corner stone from High Street were shown.

VII. NEW MEMBERS AND PROJECTS (1958-1961)

MERGER OF UNITARIAN AND UNIVERSALIST CHURCHES (1961)

MERGER OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS OF BOTH CHURCHES TO
BECOME THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION (UUWF),
INCORPORATED IN MASSACHUSETTS, MAY 15, 1963

Mrs. Frank Hutton was president the second year in the new building. In some ways the year was a change from the excitement of moving with all the problems of adjustment. The attendance was low and the actual workers were not more than twenty-five. Unity Circle which had had so much influence in the city, seemed to feel that it had none in its own surroundings. The minister and his wife did not attend the meetings; there again the full race had been run, from great influence to none. The club missed the minister's contribution to the discussion period. The literary programs were reduced now to only one a month, with the Christmas party at one of the homes and the May luncheon, as the only social events. The programs that followed themes already set were Charles Ransom's talk on "Integrated Housing" and Mrs. Juliet Saxton's explanation on "Services of the State Rehabilitation Center". George Shane's pictures of European Architecture again brought into focus the need to be able to shut out some light from the Mary Safford Room. A committee was looking into the possibilities.

For the years 1959-1960 and 1960-1961 Mrs. Genevra Johnston Blank was president. She had belonged to Unity Circle in the thirties, but circumstances forced her to go into the

business world. When she married Mr. Vernon Blank, she rejoined Unity Circle. Always a member of the church, she had lived through the Circle's greatest days when her mother was a very active member and its poet. In her second year Unity Circle celebrated its eightieth birthday. However, if the Ladies' Aid records, as of 1879, are counted as Unity Circle's beginning, it was really the 82nd year. The opening program celebrated the event. Mrs. Golden read from Mrs. Fred Hunter's Trilogy given at the sixtieth anniversary (actually sixty-second) in 1941. It included Mrs. Davis' early history of the club and much by Mrs. Hunter herself, which has been quoted in this history. Mrs. Franquemont gave the events from 1938 to the present, including World War II and the erection of the present building. Mrs. Eloise Anderson told the story of "Our Organ in Words and Music" and played the organ which she had played for the church services for many years. The rest of the year's programs were excellent and timely. There were some especially entertaining ones such as Mr. and Mrs. Oval Quist's pictures and talk on "Back to the Home of Our Ancestors" at an evening meeting with Evening Alliance.

The dues of the organization that began as 25¢ and gradually increased during the years were now made \$3. Mrs. Glen McClellan of the Evening Alliance suggested that the two organizations unite in collecting Gold Bond stamps to procure chairs. Mrs. J. R. Golden was appointed Unity Circle's chairman of the project and carried the work on successfully as long as her health permitted. Many chairs, a chair cart, a table cart and a serving cart have thus been added to the building furniture. Mrs. W. E. Stribling and Mrs. Franklin Brown also provided chairs. The second sink mentioned previously was installed at Evening Alliance's initiation. Unity Circle contributed \$220 toward it. Mrs. Harold Moore was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and had a successful year. The curtains for the windows of the Mary Safford Room were at last ordered and would be in place by the September meeting in 1961.

Mrs. Blank had become very ill early in 1961 and others had to carry on the president's work. She died that summer to the great sorrow of all of her friends; Unity Circle felt a deep loss.

The year 1960-1961 was a success financially, but beyond the Mary Safford window draperies no large purchases were made for the church building. Through the years Unity Circle members have built up many obligations. They contribute to the Community Chest, pay Des Moines Federation dues, and contribute to many special requests, such as Planned Parenthood, and the Polk County Association for the Mentally Retarded. Besides the church pledge they help the delegates go to the Geneva Conference, and contribute \$30 to the Unitarian-Universalist Service Committee, the United Appeal, pay their dues to the National Women's Alliance, and pay for the Unitarian Register's subscription for the city library and so on. They must have \$300 to pay the summer expenses and go into fall, when their money-making affairs begin. Summer activities such as silver teas, weddings and dinners have made it possible to be in good financial condition in September.

Mrs. A. F. Brennan was elected president for the year 1962-1963. She had joined Unity Circle several years before when she still lived in Marshalltown, and all of us were delighted when she and her husband moved to Des Moines. She worked steadily on various committees and has been chairman of several. Her program chairman was Miss Marjorie E. W. Smith. That program lived right up to Unity Circle's continuing interests. Members learned about the emerging nations from Martha Canfield and the Peace Corps from Professor Curtis Page; about a social workers' conference held in Brazil from Mrs. Glenna Johnson, and what Miss Agnes McCreery saw in Europe. Members were urged by Mrs. Marta Maine to attend the Conference at Lake Geneva. There was a review of the Beacon Press book, "The Changing Image of American Women", and Mrs. Louise Noun's talk on the Progressive

Women of Iowa. We found out from her discourse that most of those women were Unitarians and Universalists. The Unity Circle members were very well satisfied with the record of accomplishments of Unitarian women!

In 1944 Mrs. Arthur Davis ended her secretarial report thus; "As Unity Circle has been able to do its work well in spite of handicaps it seems to prove that it is a live organization able to carry on under difficult circumstances."

Mrs. Franquemont said at the end of her talk on the history of Unity Circle in September 1961, "What is it about Unity Circle that makes a woman so loyal that she keeps her dues up after she has been away from it for fifteen years? What is it that makes a woman who was a member only a few years and left the city four or five years ago, still pay her dues? What is it that made a woman who had been with us only about a year say she did not want to leave? It was the first group where she had felt at home and wanted. What has made Unity Circle tick like that and what can we do to make it tick louder right now?"

It wasn't audible yet, but by the end of the club year a louder tick was plainly heard. New life had come into Unity Circle with vigorous new members who began helping enthusiastically in every way. Miss Marjorie E. W. Smith, Mesdames William Neal, M. A. Meservey, Herbert Myers, John Swanson, H. W. Grubbs, Park Rinard, Stanley Griffin and Robert Southworth joined that year. John B. Isom was installed as minister, and all Unity Circle members fell in love with him and Mrs. Isom. All these wound up as Unity Circle's machinery and it has been ticking loudly ever since.

VIII. CONTINUING TO FUNCTION AS A CHARTER MEMBER OF UUWF (1961-1967)

Mrs. George Shane, a longtime member of Unity Circle who knew its aims and ideals, was president in 1961-1962. The programs lived up to those aims and ideals. All enjoyed the new curtains at the windows in the Mary Safford Room when Miss Florence Byerly took us off to New Zealand and Australia with pictures and descriptions of those countries.

Most of the year's programs were given by our own church people. Frank Miller, cartoonist for The Register, showed the group how he evolved his cartoons. He did not tell us how he painted his lovely Iowa scenes that appear often in The Register. Charles Ransom one of our favorite speakers for years, spoke on "The Dream of the Red Chamber." Mr. Isom told about the work of the Unitarian Service Committee; Professor Phillip Riggs, astronomer from Drake University showed why he did not believe man-made satellites carrying men to distant planets is possible.

On January 8, Unity Circle honored Mrs. Myrtle Golden on her eighty-seventh birthday. A plant was given to her and a big birthday cake was served.

New members who added to the year's pleasure were Mesdames R. J. Fischer, W. H. Packer, Donald Fiske, R. F. Rabe, C. B. Silletto and Miss Caroline Laughlin. The latter had been attending our meetings for years.

The work of the committee for the Foreign Student Weekend was outstanding for 1963. Mrs. John Swanson headed that committee.

65 students were housed by church members.

45 students went to the church service and stayed for dinner.

155 persons were served at the Sunday dinner.

111 free dinners were served. Those who were not hosts to the students paid for their dinners.

\$9.03 was the cost of the dinner paid by the church board.

This data is included as a criteria for other years. Besides Mrs. Swanson and her committee, Mrs. Roberta Webb, Joan Walther and three others; Mrs. Gerald Derr, Mrs. Erich Rahlson and Mrs. Robert Southworth were country chairmen and Mrs. Swanson was assistant chairman for India. Mrs. Stanley Griffin was in charge of coffee and tea at the potluck dinner at the KRNT Theater. Miss Marjorie E. W. Smith was on the telephone committee of the Board of International Education which sponsored the entire project. Considering the size of the membership the Unitarians made a greater contribution than many larger churches.

Financially, the year was a great success. Mrs. Swanson was the chairman of the Ways and Means committee. She had the women painting pottery all summer as well as making aprons, curler bags, Christmas decorations and gifts. They were rewarded, because the most money that Unity Circle ever made was made that year. During the year the Circle handled \$1963. They gave the church budget an extra \$100 and closed the year with a balance of more than \$700.

The last months of the club year were saddened by the fatal illness of Mrs. Golden. At her last birthday her daughter and son had a big reception to which just about everybody in the church went even though it was extremely icy.

It was hoped that Mrs. Golden could come to the May luncheon, but she could not. Some of the women took her the flowers that had graced the table. In just a few days she died. In Mrs. Hunter's Trilogy of 1941 she says of Mrs. Golden, who had then belonged to the Unity Circle 33 years:

"What a steadfast support of the temple Mrs. Golden has been through the years for the church, Unity Circle, the sewing group and the Sunday School. She is like a mother shielding her child. There is reverence in all our hearts for such faithfulness. After 22 years more of such faithfulness the members of Unity Circle can only add their reverence for such a life. She rose to every occasion. She put confidence in everyone. She believed 'the old order changeth yielding place to the new.'"

Mrs. Golden was happy in the new church surroundings and was eager to get the place organized... She had been house committee chairman continuously for 35 years, and knew every pan, dish, kettle and chair. She took care of them. Few things were lost or carried away. She wanted people to be as careful of church property as of their own. The store-room today is quite orderly because she insisted that we get some cupboards that we could get for nothing. "Someday," she said, "We can have really efficient ones built."

Those who worked with her loved her. She was treasurer for 19 years. There were few Ways and Means Committees of which she was not the chairman or a member. She was president for two years. She seemed to live and breathe for the Unitarian Church. At every turn Unity Circle misses her, but her bravery and her faithfulness remain with us, an ever present inspiration.

Miss Marjorie E. W. Smith was elected president of Unity Circle for 1963-1964. She brought with her, her usual enthusiasm and capacity to achieve goals. The first program was on a theme Unity Circle had been thinking about for many years. Mrs. Stanley Griffin gave a comprehensive review of race relations to date and told of her experiences during the march on Washington. John Wannamaker entertained us by telling of the family trip to Europe, especially dwelling on their daughters' reactions to the sights in contrast to those of their parents. Ed Kelley spoke at the following meeting on "Training or Retraining Men for

Employment." The Christmas party was at the church building and delightfully different. Irvin White, from Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and an active member of Drama Workshop and the Des Moines Community Playhouse, interpreted a story by Henry Van Dyke for us.

In January, Mrs. Bertin reviewed the book "The Other America" by Michael Harrington, which showed how automation and poor training was giving America a poverty stricken class. In February, Unity Circle had home folks as Mrs. William Packer and Mr. John Isom reviewed and answered questions about Unitarianism. March 12 it was still home folks. Mrs. Franquemont reviewed the old and new projects of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. A motion picture called "A Village is Waiting" was shown. Amid beautiful African scenery a village is transformed by the Service Committee workers showing the natives how to help themselves. Then Mrs. Grubbs told of our local service group's work in providing clothes for needy children. She had on display many garments the committee had made for the Polk County Child Welfare Department to dispense. The May luncheon was at the church. Afterward, Mrs. James S. Schramm of Burlington, Iowa, a Unitarian, spoke on the United Nations. All in all, the year's programs, in touching on the great issues of the United States and the World, and paying attention to Unitarian affairs, lived up to the ideals of Unity Circle in the past.

The financial year was the best Unity Circle had ever had in its eighty-six years existence. It handled about \$2,300. The balance from the preceding year was \$700. With the fiscal year from April to April, some of the money made after April 1 was credited to the next year. From 1961 through 1964 the three committees - Dinners, Ways and Means, and Rummage - were very successful. In 1964 the Dinner Committee, headed by Mrs. Grace Van Horn, which served all scheduled dinners and also a monthly dinner to the Laymen's League, made over \$400. The Rummage Committee, with Mrs. Bertin in charge, cleared \$300. There was no spring rummage sale. The Ways and Means Committee, with Mrs. Barbara Rabe as chairman, made \$550 from the bazaar and the highly successful movie, Charlie Chaplin's "The Gold Rush".

Early in the year, committees were appointed to study the needs of the church and the women's groups. After a good deal of investigation, the Board decided upon the following:

- 1 - For the kitchen -
a second refrigerator and an electric can opener and knife sharpener.
- 2 - For the dining room -
 - 1 - six dozen stainless steel knives, forks and spoons, for which Mrs. Van Horn made an excellent chest.
 - 2 - four dining tables were bought by Mrs. Stribling.
- 3 - For the auditorium -
sound equipment installed at the lectern.
- 4 - For the church treasury -
the usual annual payment.
- 5 - To the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee -
\$80 to furnish an African student with books for the year. This was beside Unity Circle's annual \$30 contributed to the Service.

Three other needs were discussed:

1 - a dish washer -

since one suitable for the purpose was found too expensive when other things were also needed, it was decided to make that a project for another year.

2 - better lighting for the Mary Safford room -

the board voted to buy a reading lamp for the speaker's pulpit, but Evening Alliance had already bought it. The overall lighting of the room will take much investigation but hopes are to remedy it soon.

3 - carpet for the auditorium -

a contribution toward that was postponed for future action.

As a memorial to Mrs Golden a wall clock for the Mary Safford Room was bought.

Unity Circle's year of 1964-1965 was a year of new friendships, interesting programs, successful finances, savage weather, floods in the spring. There were sad losses in the Unity Circle family. Those of us who knew Mrs. J. M. Bowie in her active days and visited her not long before her death know that her keen mind and broad outlook on life never left her. The same was true of Miss Mabel Harris. Her grasp of national and political life remained clear and if anyone ever "saw life and saw it whole," she did. In bearing her affliction she was an angel personified. Mrs. A. L. Embree, from the time of her joining Unity Circle, had many days of illness so that few knew her. Those who did loved her. To have someone as dear as Mrs. Grace Van Horn had made herself, taken from us overnight, was tragedy to all.

Unity Circle's programs followed along the same lines of thought that had occupied our minds for several years. They leaned a little more than usual toward the entertainment side. However, we learned much of the civic beauty of Russia from the pictures shown us by Dr. Nelle Noble and her grand niece. Compared to their subways ours are as austere as our penitentiary hallways. Mr. Robert Burlingame, as in the past, gave a different aspect not only of world affairs but to the history of the Unitarian Church in America. It was wonderful to have many of the past presidents with us at one of our meetings to help make the History of Unity Circle come alive. The Christmas party was a potluck luncheon and a tour of the Des Moines Art Center. The membership brought gifts appropriate to be given to women of advanced years who lived alone or with their families. Deference was given to our church affiliation in Mrs. Glenna Johnson's review of the book "A Free Church in a Changing World" and Mr. Isom's talk on some of the great Unitarian women of both past and present. Lee Buckley, a young student from St. Joseph's Academy, presented in word and picture, the story of her summer working as a volunteer for the Red Cross in Europe. She was most dynamic and vital. Mr. James Dunn, of Wilkie House, told us of the projects he has developed as a "Street Worker", particularly of the development of the Dramateers. The whole group was lifted in laughter as Mrs. Beatrice Chesebrough skipped through her humorous character sketches in her program entitled "Laughter With a Lift" at the spring luncheon.

At our May luncheon, it was announced that Mrs. Mildred Dyer Myers and her husband had given Unity Circle \$100 in memory of Mrs. Joseph Addison Dyer, a loyal worker for years for the Circle. Her year as president had been cut short by her death in January 1944. With this money, plates and cups for our beautiful Syracuse pattern were purchased to add to the supply given us by Miss Whitfield in memory of her mother.

Miss Marjorie Smith was the very efficient president again in 1964-1965. When Marjorie is at the helm, many surprises appear. We really think she sits up nights preparing sheets of news all illustrated to give out unexpectedly. Marjorie epitomizes the lives of the

past Unity Circle women who saw undesirable things going on in our local civic affairs and set about doing something to change them. She has worked actively and unceasingly for down-trodden and unfortunate people, whether they were victims of race prejudice or birth defects. Her enthusiasm has been contagious.

The financial year was a success due to the various activities carried on by many hard working members. A study of the amount of money made compared with the operating costs of the Circle, gifts to the church, and special contributions such as to the Southern Christian Leadership program, indicates that Unity Circle should make about \$1,000 per year. The question now is "Where could we cut down our expenses if we decided to make less money yearly?" Our new members should take a vital interest in this question.

Unity Circle has always solved its problems and will now. We do not want to lose sight of the goal to study and learn about the vital questions facing the city, the state, the country and the world.

Miss Daisy Whitfield was president of Unity Circle for the year 1965-1966. Her connection with the church had been from childhood. Her grandfather had been the first organist of the church and her mother an active member of Unity Circle.

Miss Whitfield had the program for the year planned, the committees appointed, the summer teas organized and everything ready to have the yearbooks published, when she was taken ill and could not function as president for several months. Mrs. R. F. Rabe, who was first vice-president, valiantly carried on the work of the presidency and kept the Circle moving smoothly.

Some of the programs for the year accented themes already studied such as the "Silver Anniversary" film of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee shown and explained by Mrs. Bruce Atkin, and "New Trends in Social Work" by Mrs. Margaret Cothorn, Director of the Des Moines Council of Social Agencies. An informative meeting at the Izaak Walton League's club house was enjoyed very much. We learned that conservation of all nature was the League's great aim, not just fish and fishermen. Mr. Flemming, director of the area, gave the introduction; Miss Margaret Black, Professor at Drake University, carried the topic home to all.

The Christmas program was an innovation to the Circle, instigated by Miss Whitfield. She told how the nurses at Broadlawns Hospital were unable to supply clothing for the journey home of many of their poverty stricken patients, whose clothing on their entry had been unfit to keep. The members of Unity Circle made up kits containing all the clothing needed for various sizes of men and women, and brought them to the Christmas party at Mrs. Swanson's home. They were then taken to the hospital. Miss Whitfield reported that the nurses were very happy to get them and they wrote of their appreciation and thanks.

The speakers for the remainder of the year included Mr. Donald Kaul, the Des Moines Register's writer of the column "Over the Coffee"; Mrs. Clifford Bayles of Polk County Welfare Department, whose subject was "A Safari to Africa in Word and Pictures".

The year was closed with a program of organ music by Mrs. Eloise Anderson, together with a discussion of her own poems and paintings by Mrs. Charlotte Rosenbaum (a former member).

New members of Unity Circle who were very welcome, were Mrs. Otto Heeren, Mrs. Keach Johnson, Mrs. R. G. Rainford, Mrs. Peter Wilson and Mrs. John Zug.

The international Student Weekend was a great success. Mrs. John Swanson was chairman of the committee. Fifty-five students were housed. The church board underwrote the dinner given on Sunday to the students and their hosts and attended by other church members. Mrs. Glenna Johnson was chairman of that dinner. The church board had to pay only \$7.96 to subsidize the dinner.

This year, as last, Unity Circle prepared and published the year's church directory with the help of Mr. and Mrs. John Swanson. It made \$90 for the treasury.

There was fun and income from the Crazy Calendar the women kept for one month this year. "Put a penny in the box for every button on your dress today"; or "Put a penny in the box today for every pair of gloves you own", and so on. It brought into the treasury \$35.03, not bad for one month's work.

From the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee there was received a "Certificate of Award for Distinguished Service to Unity Circle." It was framed and hung where all the church could see it. The Circle had sent \$100 over its usual \$30 annually, to celebrate the Silver Anniversary of the Service work. A donation of \$5.00 was given to Wilkie House for its library to buy books written by Negroes or about outstanding Negroes. Another \$5.00 was given to the Iowa Association for the Mentally Retarded.

For the church \$200 was given toward the cost of the hymnals; \$100 of this was given by Mrs. Southworth as a memorial to her husband, Robert. Through the years Mr. Southworth had worked unceasingly to get our church's beautiful woodwork finished as it should be.

A memorial for Mrs. Stribling, who had died in the spring, was bought with the \$25 given by Mrs. Stribling's family for that purpose. The Circle added about \$40 to the Stribling gift and bought a table and chair for the Mary Safford room.

Fifty dollars was donated toward furnishing the senior class Sunday School room. With a great deal of work by the teachers and the class that money went a long way. The results were very satisfactory.

When the above expenditures are added to the regular yearly obligations of Unity Circle to the church, U.U.W.F., A.U.U.A., and civic organizations one wonders how all this money was made. The balance in the treasury at the beginning of the year was \$548.11; at the end the balance was \$575.00. Only the leadership and its workers know how it was done. Miss Whitfield is to be congratulated on her year as president.

Mrs. R. F. Rabe was elected President of Unity Circle for the year 1966-1967. She had been vice-president and presided many times. She had been chairman of the Ways and Means Committee a few years before and had been very successful. Her enthusiasm inspired all to accomplish much during the year.

New members brought new ideas and more enthusiasm. They were Mrs. A. O. Becker, Mrs. Donald Carlson, Mrs. Rosabelle Heifner, Mrs. Glenna Johnson, Mrs. J. A. Johnson, Mrs. Corrine McNeal and Mrs. Carroll Swanson.

One could almost say that the theme of the year's programs was "Des Moines". Mr. George Shane, with the aid of pictures, showed a series of new buildings that were changing Des Moines' Townscape; later in the year Mr. Paul Ashby showed pictures and talked about Des Moines' old buildings of downtown. Then Mrs. G. L. Proudfit of the staff of the city Library, told about new books on the shelves. Mrs. Clifford Bayles, from the Child Welfare

Department, outlined the work of that division for children and complimented Unity Circle for its contribution of children's clothes to that department. The Christmas party at Mrs. Swanson's lovely home continued the previous year's idea of providing packets of clothing for the nurses of Broadlawns Hospital to use for needy patients to wear home. With the inner feeling of having done a good deed, everyone had a happy time.

Mr. Ransom brought us up to date on "Current International Events". Mr. Isom did the same for Unitarians, developing the thought that "change is the one eternal aspect of life"; Rabbi Weingart talked on "Judaism: Beliefs and Customs". Thus Unity Circle's programs showed a great interest in local affairs.

Somehow the Circle made its usual amount of money. There was no bazaar, but a garage sale at Mrs. Rabe's home netted \$500 and the fall and spring rummage sales with Katherine Bertin in charge made \$292.

The Circle again published the Church Directory for the year, the work being done by Mrs. Swanson and her helpers. The International Student weekend was as usual a success.

Perhaps the giving of an extra \$500 to the Church gave the Circle its happiest moment. They also added \$50 to the previous donation toward the new hymnals. They bought an indoor-outdoor carpet for the Church School Teachers' lounge. Besides the Circle's usual contributions to the Unitarian Universalist's various organizations and many civic groups they gave \$10 to the Y.W.C.A. building fund.

One of the last projects of the year was the three night showing of the movie "My Little Chickadee" starring W. C. Fields and Mae West.

The programs of Unity Circle, at first, show that women were seeking cultural development. Then came their interest in suffrage, civic betterment, child labor and the arts. They had the satisfaction of seeing many of the problems solved. As world communications broadened all phases of information, the women's interests have turned to the problems of not only the underprivileged of America but also those of the world.

Unity Circle never went out en mass with banners flying their name, but as individuals. Today the women of the church are doing the same thing in various groups fighting for Peace, Freedom and racial reforms. The percentage of women from the church actively working on such projects is probably greater now than in the golden age of the Circle.

Mrs. Fred Hunter in summarizing the years to 1941 gave credit to all past presidents individually. That is almost impossible now, for the past twenty-four years have had many very gracious and hard working presidents. Each has been outstanding, contributing in her own special way. Some of the years were very difficult. Much, much credit must be given to women who through the years have been pillars of the organization, but would not accept the presidency. It is doubtful if the committees for programs, dinners, house, ways and means and rummage could have functioned without Bess Moore, Ida Quist and Margaret Locker. Unity Circle was one of the founders of the Des Moines Federation of Women's Clubs. The Federation keeps a file of clubs' yearbooks and both for the content (a tribute to the programs) and the appearance, the yearbooks of Unity Circle have been held up as outstanding.

Among the new members led by our Minister's wife, Mrs. Isom, are so many capable, willing and enthusiastic women that Unity Circle, a charter member of the new Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, can look forward to many golden years ahead.

CONCLUSION

This history of the organization now called Unity Circle covers the years from the formal organization of the Ladies' Aid Society of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, January 28, 1879 through the year 1966-1967. It was compiled by Mrs. E. A. Franquemont who turned her manuscript over to the History Editing Committee in the late fall of 1970. The plan for the future is to write each year's history and add it year by year. If we count from the formal organization date, Unity Circle will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary January 28, 1979.

The present members thank not only Mrs. Franquemont, but the members from all the past years, for the rich heritage they have given us. We shall try to carry on according to their traditions, knowing and following the best of the past; but keeping our minds open to the constant changes which demand courage to adopt new projects and different ways of carrying them through.

UNITY CIRCLE

SIGNIFICANT DATES

- 1879 - Ladies' Aid Society formally organized.
Constitution adopted January 28, 1879.
- 1885 - March 11. Rev. Sylvan S. Hunting proposed a new plan for the society. It is thought that the change to literary and cultural topics was made then.
- 1890 - April 25. Reorganization. Name changed to Women's Section of the Unity Club. In August a new constitution was adopted.
- 1895 - November 3. Constitution revised. Name changed to Women's Unity Club.
- 1903 - Unity Club reorganized. Name changed to Unity Circle. New Constitution.
- 1927-1928 - Constitution revised. This was the last change made to the present time.
- 1979 - January 28. The 100th anniversary of Unity Circle.

DES MOINES UNITARIAN CHURCH

At the first meeting in Burlington, the Iowa Unitarian Association named John R. Effinger field worker. On June 30 that year he met with 30 Unitarians, Universalists, Hicksite Quakers and other religious liberals in the Union Block, Fifth and Locust Streets, in Des Moines, then a city of 16,000 residents. A little more than a month later, on August 5, 1877, nine persons again met with Mr. Effinger and associated themselves together into the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines.

- Oval Quist

DES MOINES UNITARIAN CHURCH BUILDINGS

- 1882 - The first church building erected at 15th and Linden.
- 1905 - New church building at Eleventh and High Streets.
- 1957 - A new church building erected at Bell Avenue and Casady Drive.
First occupied in September 1957.

DES MOINES UNITARIAN MINISTERS

John R. Effinger, 1877-1880

Sylvan S. Hunting, 1880-1886

Ida C. Hultin, 1886-1891

Leon A. Harvey, 1891-1898

Oscar Clute, 1898

Mary A. Safford, 1899-1911*

Marie H. Henney, Assistant to Miss Safford

Gertrude von Petzold, 1908-1910

Everett Dean Martin, 1911-1915

Curtis W. Reese, 1915-1919

Edmund H. Reeman, 1920-1924

Henry J. Adlard, 1924-1928

Donald Lothrop, 1928-1929

Charles J. Dutton, 1929-1933

Aaron S. Gilmartin, 1933-1934

E. Burdette Backus, 1935-1937

Karl A. Bach, 1938-1944

Grant A. Butler, 1944-1948

Charles W. Phillips, 1949-1956

Harold Dodge Buck, 1957-1960

John B. Isom, 1961

*The Rev. Eleanor Gordon filled the ministry of Miss Mary Safford from 1904-1906. Miss Safford had become very ill. Miss Gordon remained for two years but was never elected minister.

Sources for the History of Unity Circle

All available secretaries' books.

Histories written by Mrs. Arthur L. Davis, Mrs. Fred Hunter and Mrs. E. A. Franquemont.

All available year books.

Scrap books.

Information from Mr. Oval Quist's church history files.

All the above are in the Unity Circle filing cabinet in the First Unitarian Church building, Bell Avenue and Casady Drive, Des Moines, Iowa.